

REMARKS

Claims 7-9, 11, 12, 19-22 and 25-28 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 7, 19, 25 and 26 are amended, and claims 15-18, 23 and 24 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited therein. Claims 7 and 19 are amended to include the allowable subject matter of claims 23 and 24, respectively. Claims 25 and 26 are amended into independent form. Thus, no new matter is added.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indications that claims 27 and 28 are allowed and that claims 23-26 contain allowable subject matter. However, Applicant respectfully submits that the application is condition for allowance based on the amendments above.

I. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

Claims 7-9, 11-15 and 19-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,486,866 to Kuwahara et al. in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0007651 to Liang et al.; claims 16 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Amundson et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2006/0038772); and claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Amundson in view of Ikeda. The rejections of canceled claims 15-18 are moot, and the rejection of claims 7-9, 11-14 and 19-22 is respectfully traversed.


As discussed above, independent claims 7 and 19 are amended to include the allowable subject matter of claims 23 and 24, respectively, and thus claims 23 and 24 are in allowable condition. Further, claims 8, 9, 11-14 and 20-22, which variously depend from claims 7 and 19, are also in allowable condition for at least depending on allowable claims 7 and 19. Withdrawal of the rejections is thus respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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